

Against Dietary Veganism

Philosopher and poet Al-Ma'arri first outlined veganism over a thousand years ago, and well-documented debates regarding the modern practice of veganism span across two centuries. The doctrine roots itself preeminently in ethical considerations, and despite attempts at defining it, veganism amounts to far more than a diet or health fad.

Critics of veganism often suggest that ethical consumption habits under capitalism are incapable of stopping exploitation. They argue as long as exploitation continues the personal choice of refusing to consume animal-derived products might be viewed as essentially fruitless.

The abstinence from animal consumption does not prevent animals from being slaughtered. Instead, it helps us recognize the problems associated with animal consumption, and how it's completely unnecessary.

In isolation, our individual habits and beliefs do little to address the massive expenditures of capitalist industry. Democratism coerces us into believing individual resistance can help bring change, or somehow end capitalism. But corporate, commercial, industrial, agricultural, military and government consumption is never less than three times all other consumption combined. Capitalism must be held responsible for wrecking the planet, instead of the habits and beliefs of individuals.

One might say veganism means opposing every form of slavery and domestication. While reminding us that our animal friends are never granted job interviews, veganism must also emphasize and challenge the exploitation of humans.

Today, many of us have jobs because we believe we cannot survive without them. Justification for the consumption of animal-derived products is often predicated on a similar basis: we cannot survive and thrive without killing and consuming the flesh of our animal peers. But together, humanity produces more than enough wealth to live, eat, and drink abundantly without the exploitation of animals, or humans. Global industry produces more than enough food to go around, but under the capitalism nearly half of it becomes waste.

Scarcity and poverty are systemic. They exist as a key feature of capitalism because they must. Very few people today are in immediate existential danger if they fail to kill in a hunt. People would be in danger if the stores and restaurants suddenly closed. We rely on them for everything we need.

In attempting to escape nature, humans created civilization, and now the monopoly of violence once held by nature belongs to the State. We can link the rise of persistent hominin carnivory with the emergence of increasingly complex behavior and culture. The transition to meat consumption emerged parallel to things like: language, fire, technology, hunting parties, and eventually farming, housing, goods, mass society—perhaps even the first human socio-cultural groups. Based on studies of their artifacts and teeth, the diets of our relatives prior to the meat-eating *Homo erectus* seem based on fruits, greens, and nuts. Anthropologist and

author Layla AbdelRahim suggests the tradition of hunting helped lead to the first alienation in human history, and to domestication afterwards.

Balanced plant-based diets taste delicious and prove beneficial to human health in countless ways. Scientists have demonstrated that plant-based nutrients are absorbed more efficiently by the human body, and in greater amounts. Plant-based diets benefit conditions ranging from cardiovascular to mental health, and they even help to counteract cancer. Many elite-level athletes and Olympians have moved to plant-based diets, especially on game day, yet plant-based diets are still frowned upon and viewed as malnourishing.

Scientists recognize that scaling down or eliminating the massive industries responsible for exploiting animals will be essential in the fight against human-caused climate change. Horticulture beyond our present sub-standard model of monocropping and animal husbandry has the potential to create ecological wonders. There are many sustainable, bio-intensive and plant-based food cultivation methods for most climates. These could be scaled to meet everyone's needs.

Capitalism is busy trying to become more efficient in order to reduce costs and increase profits for a select few. At the risk of our only biosphere and home, we must stay aware of ongoing political recuperation; an exploitation-free future cannot be a capitalist one. Capitalism has always been a revolutionary system. It loves to incorporate new revolutionary trends. Any attempts to reduce veganism into a diet must always be understood with this in mind: capitalism wants to go vegan and green. The extant distortions of veganism which ignore the question of exploitation can only serve the interests of capital.

The industrial system responsible for domestication and exploitation appears unlikely to suddenly end, minus the appearance of some unforeseen circumstance. In most regions, the threats posed by man-made climate change seem a far greater danger to capitalism than revolution. Shouldn't exploitation be contested on the ethical level, if nowhere else? The continued existence of capitalism does not excuse ongoing exploitation, suffering, and death. Attempts to alleviate these afflictions which dare to consider an escape trajectory from capitalism deserve our congratulations.

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